

Meeting Date: January 10-12, 2007

Agenda Item No. 15

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Bureau Chief Approval: _____

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Background:

In May, 2006, the Commission modified fishing rules on Lake Pend Oreille tributaries which included the opening of the Clark Fork River to year round fishing and establishing an early opening date (April 1) for Pack River and Grouse and Lightning creeks. This action was taken to increase harvest of rainbow trout from Lake Pend Oreille to help reduce their population numbers. The reduction in both rainbow trout and lake trout numbers is needed to reduce their predation on kokanee.

In addition to allowing anglers to harvest rainbow trout in tributary streams, the Department established a Harvest Incentive Program to increase harvest during 2006.

At the time of the action last May, the Commission requested an update on fish population status in Lake Pend Oreille and the opportunity to review changes by the January 2007 meeting.

Recent rainbow harvest and current population data, along with kokanee survival information, indicate that conditions in Lake Pend Oreille still have not improved sufficiently to allow the kokanee population to rebound.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104 (b) 2 gives the Commission the authority to set Fishing Rules. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:

The region is continuing to provide information on fish population status to the public; region has also established a citizen task force that meets monthly to keep stakeholders informed and solicit management recommendations.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff is recommending that the Commission not take any action on current fishing rules in Lake Pend Oreille at this time.

Justification:

Rainbow and lake trout population numbers have not declined sufficiently to allow kokanee numbers to rebuild and meet population goals.

The Department will be going through the standard fishing rule review process during 2007 for the 2008-2009 rule cycle and that would be the best process to involve the public in any needed fishing rule changes. The region will monitor kokanee survival and predator population status, keep the public informed, and make a recommendation if rule changes are needed.